

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated September 15, 2003. Claims 12 and 14-15 remain pending in this application. Claim 12 is the independent claim. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication that Claims 15 and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 12 has been amended to include the limitations of Claims 16 and intervening Claim 13 and is believed allowable.

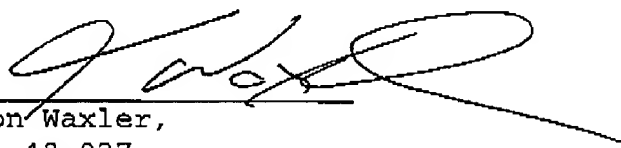
On the merits, the Office Action rejected Claims 12-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Spreen (U.S. Patent No. 5,168,440; hereinafter "Spreen") in view of Duspiva et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,965,712; hereinafter "Duspiva"). Applicant respectfully believes the amendments to Claim 12 render the rejection moot and requests its withdrawal.

14-15 depend from independent Claim 12 discussed above and are believed patentable for at least the same reasons. In addition, Applicant respectfully believes Claims 14-15 to be independently patentable and requests separate consideration of each claim.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached by telephone at the number given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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